

R. Philo Nauticus

P R O P O S A L

F O R T H E

ENCOURAGEMENT of SEAMEN
to serve more readily in His MAJESTY'S
NAVY, for preventing of Desertion,
supporting their Wives and Families,
and for the easier and quieter Govern-
ment of His MAJESTY'S SHIPS.

—Wou'd ye unto my Affes prove but kind
Indulge those Comforts I have left behind.

DRYDEN.

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. MILLAR in the Strand.

MDCCLVIII.



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P R O P O S A L

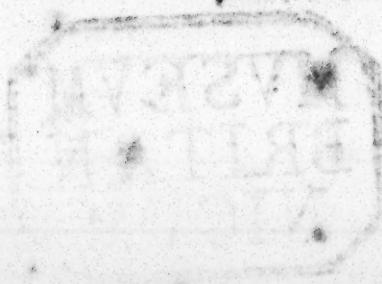
FOR THE



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L O N D O N

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TO THE
OFFICERS and SEAMEN

Belonging to the

ROYAL NAVY.

GENTLEMEN,

SO many Schemes have been formed for encouraging Seamen to enter voluntarily into His Majesty's Navy, and to serve their Country chearfully, and so many Acts of Parliament have been passed for that laudable Purpose, that whoever publishes a new Plan, may naturally expect to hear his Presumption derided. However, considering that many of these Attempts have failed for want, perhaps,
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of the Schemer's being thoroughly acquainted with the Nature of the Service, the Author hath here ventured to sketch the out-lines of one, which he hopes, if ever carried into Execution, will effectually answer the End in view, and now recommends it to your attentive Perusal ; after which he will be glad to know what Objections are made to it, in order to obviate them, if possible, and amend his Plan, being far from entertaining an Opinion that he alone is capable of drawing up a perfect Scheme.

I am

Gentlemen,

Your faithful Friend,

and humble Servant

Philo Nauticus.

A PROPOSAL, &c.

IT is well known that to engage Men to undertake any Occupation cheerfully, you must better their Condition; and the simpler and more adequate the Method for answering that Purpose, the more readily it ought to be embraced.

To attain these desirable Ends, it is therefore proposed,

I That a Number of small Houses be built at each Dock-Yard, viz. *Chatham*, *Portsmouth*, and *Plymouth*, on a Piece of Ground bought for that Purpose; the Rent of each House not to exceed Fifty Shillings a Year.

II. That all married Seamen, and especially such as are of those Counties in which the Houses stand, or the neighbouring ones, shall have the Preference, for themselves and their Families to reside therein; and next to them such as are unmarried, for themselves and their indigent Parents.

III. That it shall be an established Condition made known to all Seamen who reside at those Ports, that whenever the Exigency of the State calls upon them for their Service, they are immediately to repair on board such Ships as they are ordered to, whether commissioned at the Port they reside at or no: But if any Ships are commissioned at those Ports, then such Ships are always to be first manned out of the Number residing there, and the rest to be subject to the Orders and Disposal of the Lords of the Admiralty.

IV. That the Rent of these Houses, *viz.* Fifty Shillings a Year for each, shall be defalked out of the Seamen's Wages inhabiting such Houses, half yearly, or as often as the Ship is paid by the Treasurer of the Navy; each Pay and Muster Book to have Columns for marking the Number of the House, and the Division or Port it belongs to, against each Man's Name.

V. That in Case of Death or Desertion, the Captain of the Ship, on Board which such Seaman shall have served, shall,

by the first Opportunity, acquaint the Commissioners of the Navy, or the Commissioner of the Port, with such Death or Desertion ; that the House in which he dwelt may be disposed of to some other Seaman desirous of residing at that Place : with this Distinction, that if any Sailor will marry the Widow of the Deceased, he shall have the Preference, and she shall not be moved out of the House ; but that the Wife of the Runaway and his Family shall immediately be turned out.

VI. That each of these Houses shall take in two sick Seamen, whom the Wife shall attend as a Nurse, and be paid for Lodging and taking Care of them at the Rate of per Week for each Man : And if the Husband be abroad, she shall take in three or four, as the Physician or Surgeon shall judge proper, and in Dieting and every other necessary Care, she shall strictly follow their Directions.

VII. That the Children of such Seamen shall be employed in the Services of the Navy so soon as capable thereof ; both Sexes whilst young in picking Oakham

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for the Dock-Yards; and the Boys, when grown up, as Officers' Servants on Board the King's Ships. The Girls to make all the Ships Colours, and the Slop Cloaths for the Sea-Men, for which Purpose the Contractors shall be obliged to employ them; and when they come of Age to marry, each Seaman who marries one of them to have a House directly; or, if none be vacant, the first that falls. Many of the industrious Wives or Mothers may keep little Shops, and sell Necessaries for supplying the Wants of others.

VII. That in Time of Peace such a Number of Seamen at each Port as are necessary (after manning the Guard Ships) be chosen out in Rotation by the Commissioners of the Port, to be employed in the several Services of the Yards at 15 *d.* per Day, and the others to have leave, from the Lords of the Admiralty, to go into the Merchant's Service, and the Commissioner to keep a List of all such Men.

IX. That such petty Officers and Seamen have a Ticket of Leave signed by the Commissioner of the Port, specifying the

Number of each Man's House, and the Division to which he belongs; this Ticket to be given to the Commander of the Merchant Ship in which such Seaman serves, and be an Authority for his stopping 50 Shillings a Year for the House Rent, in the same Manner as is proposed to be done when he serves in the Navy; this Money to be paid by the Master into the fixpenny Office when he pays the Greenwich Hospital Money, and on Failure or Neglect thereof to make it good.

- X. That in Case his Majesty's Proclamation, or an Advertisement from the Lords of the Admiralty, require the immediate Service and Attendance of such petty Officers and Seamen as have had leave to go in the Merchants Service, those at home do forthwith repair to their respective Divisions, and such as happen to be abroad, as soon after as they can possibly receive due Notice: And in Case of Disobedience, they and their Families to forfeit all the before mentioned Privileges and Indulgencies.

- XI. That for the Benefit of such Seamen

employed abroad as are desirous of remitting Money for the Support of their Wives and Families without Expence, it is proposed that all petty Officers and Seamen belonging to any of the Divisions of *Chatham*, *Portsmouth*, or *Plymouth*, who are so inclined, shall before they sail make known to the Commissioner of the Port, the monthly Allowance each Man will make to his Wife or Family during his Absence : and that a Book or List of the Names of such petty Officers and Seamen, with the particular Sums so allotted by each Man, together with the Number of his House, and the Division it belongs to, be left with the Commissioner of the Port, signed by each Man against his Name, and witnessed by the Clerk of the Check at his last Muster, and by the Captain, and the signing Officers of the Ship, before she proceeds on her Voyage, as an Authority for paying such Sums to the Wives and Families of those Men who signed the List ; and that a Counter-part of this Book be kept by the Captain of each Ship. And to prevent any Loss happening to the Crown, in Case such petty

Officer or Seaman die abroad, the Captain is strictly enjoined to write to the Commissioners of the Navy, or the Commissioner of the Port, by the first Opportunity that offers, to acquaint him with the Death of every such petty Officer and Seaman.

ILLUSTRATION of each Article separately.

- I. As by the Scheme proposed all Hospitals will become useless (except a Pest House, or Infirmary for small Pox or other contagious Distempers) it were to be wished therefore that a Stop were put to the Hospital now building at *Plymouth*, and that a Number of the small Houses here proposed were erected in its stead: for Example, five or six hundred by way of proving the Effect of this Plan; beginning on a small Scale being the least expensive and most certain Method of demonstrating whether or no the Ends proposed are likely to be answered thereby. It is imagined these Houses may be built for 50*l.* or 60*l.* apiece, if not for less; as great Part of the Timber, Materials, viz. Old Masts and Yards, Beams and

Planks belonging to condemned Ships, may be made serviceable in these kinds of Buildings. But should the Charge amount higher, and the annual Rent never reimburse the first national Expence, the public Advantages thereof, as well as the private Good done to so useful a Body of Men and their distressed Families, will be a sufficient Compensation. To expatiate upon the particular Advantages attending this Proposal would swell to a Volume, or perhaps appear like begging Recommendations of it. I shall therefore only say in general, what I might positively affirm, that if the Morals of our Seamen are to be reformed, this Scheme will greatly contribute to that laudable End.

- II. If any thing can be a Tye upon, or bind the Affections of Men, it is the Care of those (in our Absence) for whom we have the tenderest Concern ; and that is greatly provided for in this Article. Take but a View of the present distressed Condition of most of the common Seamen's Wives and Families. To what extreme Necessities are they generally driven, when the Husbands are on a

foreign Voyage? The best of them have only some small Credit on an exorbitant Usurer, or perhaps with some Ale-House Keeper, equally an Extortioner. How many of these poor Creatures have neither Beds to lie on, nor Garret or Hovel wherein to sleep, no not even on the bare Boards! Where is the Seaman whose Heart is so hard as not to feel these Sufferings? and perhaps too he feels them at a Time when he is going to attack the Enemies of his Country, and when his Mind ought to be filled with every glad Thought that can animate his Courage. Add to these the Number of still more deplorable Wretches, who are famishing for want of a Morfel of Bread, perhaps too with young Children hanging at their Breasts, and who are often driven by Necessity to commit Crimes which Distress alone could force them into against their better Inclinations. By the comfortable Habitation here proposed for the Seaman's Wife and Family during his Absence, his Mind will be relieved from those Oppressions of Domestic Grief and Care; he will then consider himself
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and Family as become the Concern of the State. Temptations to Vice and Folly being removed, he will serve cheerfully abroad, and come Home with Satisfaction.

III. The Terms of this Article are so plain and easy as to need no Explanation, farther than observing that when a Ship belonging to any one Division is paid off at another (which must often happen) Dock Vessels at that Port are to be provided for carrying the Seamen with their Bedding and Clothes to the Division they belong to.

IV. By the first Article it is supposed the Expence of building one of these comfortable Houses will be 50*l.* or 60*l.* Let it be rated at the highest, and suppose 4000 to be erected at each Port, which will be 12,000 at the three, the total Amount of so many Houses will be 720,000*l.* that is 240,000*l.*: at each Port; the Rent of this Number of Houses at 50 Shillings a Year, will bring in annually 30,000*l.* so that in 24 Years the Government will reimburse itself the original Expence of these Buildings; but allowing the Repairs to amount to a
Quarter

Quarter Part of the Rent one Year with another, even at that Rate the first Expence will be repaid in 32 Years. It is true that for all this Time the Government will receive no Interest for that Sum other than the National Advantages before recited, over and above the Rents of such Houses as may endure longer than the Term of 32 Years: but then it will save the original Expence of building the Hospital now in Hand at *Plymouth*, and also of any other intended to be built elsewhere. The Method of deducting for the Rent out of the Men's Wages is plain and simple, and attended with no additional Trouble but the bare inserting of two Columns in the Muster and Pay Books for the N^o of the House, and the Division wherein each Man resides.

- V. This Clause will fix the Rambler, and encourage the good Man, as there is a Provision pointed out for his Widow after his Decease.

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VI. The better Care that will be taken of the Sick, by having a Nurse to every two, three, or four Men (whereas at present there is not one allowed to tend every Twenty Men in the Hospitals) and the different Manner in which they will be lodged, must inevitably both shorten the time of Cure, and lessen the Expence : besides the Allowance of per Week will be a great help towards the Support and Maintenance of the Seaman's Wife and Family. And as every Woman who takes sick Men into her House is to be subject to the Direction of the Physician and Surgeons for that Time, as to the Method of dieting them and keeping them clean, which is of the greatest Consequence, so it is but just they should be liable to some Penalty or Mulct, in Case of Neglect or Disobedience. Thus far a Method is pointed out, reciprocally beneficial both to the sick Man, and the Sailors Wives as Nurses. Let us now turn our Thoughts on the Benefits arising to the King's Service. It is well known a Set of People, called Crimps, constantly attend

tend upon our Hospitals, to entice the Seamen as they recover to desert the Navy, and enter on board some Merchant Ship or Privateer, (the latter more frequently in time of War;) first debauching them with Drink, and then bribing them with Money. None of these Harpies will dare to hover about the sick Men in these little Towns, for fear of feeling the just Resentment of the whole Community for such base Attempts, as the Seaman must be sensible that his Desertion will subject his Wife and Family to be turned out of Doors. Another very material Advantage will moreover accrue. When Ships come into clean at any of these Ports, instead of the Seamens being kept Prisoners, as it were, and close confined on board some Ship in Ordinary, whilst that to which they belong is in the Dock, they may safely be trusted ashore with their Wives and Families, and the Captain be under no Apprehension of their deserting; and if any should be found missing, the Officer will know where to look for them.

VII. Were the Question to be asked, What becomes of the Offspring of most of our Sailors? the Solution would puzzle beyond most Questions in Algebra. Here then is a Provision at once traced out for those both of this and future Generations; charitable in its Institution, and laudable in its End; a more glorious Object than Mr. Fielding's Marine Society, though that is most justly deserving of Praise, whilst this remains in Embryo: For scarce any Draught need be made of poor Land-men for the Use of the Navy after a few Years Establishment of this Plan; and consequently the more Hands may be employed in Tillage and Manufactures.

VIII. Let us suppose the Number of Houses at each Dock Yard completed, as proposed; they will then contain 12000 Seamen. Let us also suppose the Number of Seamen for the current Year voted by Parliament to be 8, or 10,000; these will be employed in the several stationed Ships abroad, and Guard-Ships at home; the remaining Number will be

be either 2,000, or 4,000 ; many of these will be required to carry on the labouring naval Services of the Dock-Yards ; by their means the Sails and all Kind of Stores may be aired and kept in much better Order than at present ; and moreover the Ships in Ordinary may be cleaned and well looked after, the Moorings more frequently inspected, and numberless other useful Services be performed, such as clearing away Banks, Shoals, &c. that now lye neglected ; for which Labours the Men will receive Fifteen Pence per Day ; a comfortable Subsistence, when added to those other little Helps arising from the Employment of their Wives and Children in the Manner already set forth, out of which the Seaman will be able to pay his House Rent as well as if he belonged to any Ship in Sea pay ; and the Chips, which are constantly given twice a Week out of the Dock-Yards to the Poor, will be a great Article towards the Expence of Firing. The remaining Number of Seamen, which by the present Scale will be but small, are to have
leave

leave to go into the Merchants Service. Wherefore the Plan may be augmented as it shall be found to succeed in Utility and Advantages, and a Fund be raised for that Purpose either by Parliament or private Subscriptions.

IX. By this Article an easy Method is pointed out for the Government's securing the Seaman's House Rent while he is in the Merchant's Service ; as the Ticket of Leave given to the Seaman by the Commissioner, will specify the Number of his House and the Division it stands in ; and in Case of the Seaman's being discharged abroad from one Merchant Ship to another, the Ticket going along with him (or if that should be lost, the Master's Certificate) will shew the Number of the House, and that he belongs to such a Division in the Crown's Department, and be an authority for that second Master's stopping the Rent ; so that the Government cannot suffer, unless by the Negligence of the Master ; for which Reason it is but just he should make good the Loss : and as Masters of Merchant Ships are obliged

lized to pay into the Sixpenny Office the *Greenwich* Hospital Money, the additional Trouble of paying in at the same Time the Seaman's House Rent will be but small.

- X. It cannot be doubted that this Article will be chearfully and readily complied with by the Seamen, after the before-mentioned comfortable Provisions made for their Wives and Families.
- XI. No Provision being made by this Article for the Payment of any Part of the Seamen's Wages to their Wives and Families whilst the Ships they belong to are abroad in foreign Parts, excepting those Seamen who are Residents of the three Divisions within the Department of the Crown, it is presumed that such singular Indulgence will be the only Means to engage greater Numbers of Seamen to resort thither. If we will but take a View of the Seamen employed in Colliers and the northward Navigation, we shall find their Wives and Families inhabiting small comfortable Cottages, such as are here
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propos'd,

propos'd, in almost every little Town along the Coast from Ipswich to the Orkneys; and these Seamen, for Robustness, Cleanliness, and Sobriety, are the Flower of the Kingdom: and why? because they have a Home, and their licentious, rambling Disposition is softened into Sedateness by the Comforts of a domestick Life, which will operate, more or less, upon the most abandoned Libertine. Is there not room then to hope for a Change in the Morals of many of our Seamen by this beneficent Proposal? Nor can there be a more easy and certain Method of paying any Sum of Money, allowed by a Seaman to his Wife and Family during his Absence abroad, or of preventing any Loss from accruing thereby to the Publick, than that pointed out in this Article.

In War Time, if a Number of Seamen be employ'd more than are comprehended in this Plan, and it shall be judg'd necessary to encourage them by enabling them to remit to their Wives and Families any part of their Wages which they shall consent to allow

low for their Support, it may be done in the easy Manner following, viz. Let every Captain of a Ship in foreign Parts transmit to the Commissioners of the Navy, every twelve Months, a List of the Names of all such petty Officers and Seamen as are willing and desirous to have a Part of their Wages paid to their Wives and Families, signed by each Man against the Sum express'd (as before directed,) and attested by the Captain and signing Officers of the Ship. On the Arrival of this List let the Commissioners of the Navy publish a Copy of it in the daily Papers for a Week together; giving Notice that upon the Application of the Wives and Families of such Men whose Names are inserted in that List, they will, on a Day appointed, pay the Allowances therein specified, upon a Certificate being produced from the Minister and Church-Wardens of the Parish where such Wives, &c. reside, in the Manner and Form annexed.

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Basingstoke

Basingstoke Parish,
County of } THESE are to cer-
Southampton. } tify, that
now residing in
this Parish, is the Wife of John Tompkin,
belonging to his Majesty's Ship Lynn, at
Jamaica.

And whereas by the List published
in the Gazette of Saturday April
by the Commissioners of the Navy, it appears,
that the said John Tompkin allows his Wife
Shillings per Month, and that there is now
due to her the Sum of Shillings, the said Sum
will be paid to the Bearer of this Certificate on the
Day of by the Commissioners of his
Majesty's Navy, at their Office in London.

Sign'd T— G—, Rector.
M— T—, }
B— B—, } Churchwardens.

Which the Minister and Churchwarden
shall be obliged to give gratis, under a
certain Penalty; and the Person pro-
ducing such Certificate shall be paid the
respective Sum so allotted by each Man,
which Certificate is to pass for its Value
till paid by the Commissioners of the
Navy. By this Means there will be no
Embarass-

Embarrassment of Office, and the Seamen's Wives and Families will receive the Money allotted without the Trouble and Expence of long and fatiguing Journeys to Town.

Forging such Certificates, or committing any other Fraud in relation to them, or personating any Man's Wife, or other Person appointed by him to receive this Portion of his Pay, to be made as criminal as the Legislature shall judge proper.

As the Books or Lists of Seamen belonging to every Ship who make this Allowance of Wages to their respective Wives or Families will always appear at the Pay Table when the Ship is paid off, the Seaman's neat Wages may be liquidated in an Instant.

Such farther Articles and Rules as shall be found necessary for the good Regulation and quiet Government of the Seamen at each of these Divisions, and preventing the Sale of Spirituous Liquors amongst them, may be soon framed by the Lords of the Admiralty, and the Commissioners at those Ports authorized to carry them into Execution.

Thus far I have thrown out my Thoughts for the Benefit and Encouragement of the petty Officer and common Seaman; I shall now point out the Difficulties and Embarrassments attending the Captain and such of the Warrant Officers as are chargeable with Stores.

The Captain, by the present Instructions, is obliged to keep Twenty-nine Books; and by a late Scheme he is yearly to transmit Thirty-two more, in all Sixty-one; which are more or less voluminous and troublesome, according to the Rate of the Ship he commands, as the Complement of Men is accordingly greater or smaller. Close Application and Attention are necessary to keep these Books in regular Order, and conformable to the Counterparts kept by the Purser, Gunner, Boatswain, and Carpenter, without which the Captain is not to receive a general Certificate from the Commissioners of the Navy, which however is absolutely necessary to his being paid his Wages. To give a particular Relation of the Nature and Contents of all the several Books which the Captain is to keep, would swell beyond the
Intent

Intent of this Performance: let it suffice that all the Provisions which every Man in the Ship eats and drinks, the Cloaths he wears, the Tobacco he smokes, how often he is sick (and particularly if of an amorous Disease) must be specified in those Books; as likewise all the different Kinds of Provision, Ammunition, Stores, received and expended by the Ship in her Voyage. Certainly some Degree of Accuracy, both in Writing and Arithmetic, is required in all this Business. At the same Time the Captain is to navigate, discipline, and fight the Ship, and perhaps is often sent to Foreign Ports, where he is required to execute Ministerial Commissions. Notwithstanding all these different Duties, if on his return Home any of the before-mentioned Books are found imperfect (though occasioned by his Clerk's dying or running away) he cannot receive a Farthing of his Wages. Some Captain's Accounts have been known to lie more than Seven Years before he could get them passed, and even then not without exorbitant quickening Fees: many Captains there may have been, whose Neglects (or perhaps worse Faults) will not bear Vindication:

Let

Let all such be punished in future, and the King's Service purged of them; but let not the upright innocent Man and his Family suffer for the Guilty, nor the Service be rendered insupportable by additional Difficulties.

With regard to Gunners, Boatswains, and Carpenters, how many have been promoted to those Offices who scarce could write their own Names, much less keep an Account of the Expences of the Stores under their Care, though other-ways very deserving good Men. Now where such are found in a Ship, the Captain's Attention must be constantly applied to the Regulation of their Books as well as his own.

The Purser's Employ is of all the Offices in a Ship the most lucrative. It is true his Charge is great; but it is apprehended that if his Office were changed into that of a Commissary or * *Ecrivain du Roy*, in the manner
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* The Nature and Duty of the *Ecrivain du Roy* may be seen in the *Ordonance de la Marine* of Louis XIV.

it is in most Foreign Services, the Government might avail themselves of many Thousand Pounds a Year, and particularly in the issuing and savings of Provisions ; all such being now a Douceur to the Purser, and the Government paying him a certain Price for all the Provisions he saves in a Voyage, which is carried to his Credit, and he receives a Balance Bill for it, which becomes payable in Course. These Balance Bills amounted last War to many Hundred Thousand Pounds. Wherefore were these Officers throughout the Navy made Commissaries, or Clerks to the King, with a suitable Salary, and Under Clerks allowed them according to the Rates of the Ships in which they serve, and as an Encouragement for their OEconomy to have Five per Cent. upon all the Provisions saved in a Voyage, with an Extra-Allowance for taking Care of the Warrant Officer's Stores, and for keeping all the Books which they and the Captain now keep, vast Sums of Money would accrue to the Crown ; the Captain be greatly eased of his present Burthen, instead of being doubly loaded, the Stores be better taken care of, and more regular

gular Accounts rendered of the whole
Conduct and Management of the Ship.

P. S. If any of these Hints prove useful,
or ever become a Foundation, whereon to
build a Superstructure for the Welfare
and Benefit of the Navy, the Author will
think himself most amply rewarded.



F I N I S

